

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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P R 191314Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 7925

EXDIS
CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:PEPR, AF, PK, IN, US, IR
SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS FOR US POLICY OF COUP IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: TEHRAN 4547, KABUL 4018

1. JUST AS IT HAS AMBASSADOR ELIOT, AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S
CHALLENGING CALL FOR FRESH THINKING AND AN INTEGRATED
PLAN OF ACTION TO DEAL WITH THE NEW STRATEGIC SITUATION
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RESULTING FROM THE COUP IN AFGHANISTAN STRIKES ME AS
EMINENTLY SOUND.

2. ALTHOUGH THE AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENTS HAVE UNDER-
STANDABLY NOT HAD AS POWERFUL AN IMPACT IN INDIA AS
THEY HAVE HAD IN THE NEIGHBORING CENTO COUNTRIES, THE
GOIIS CONCERNED BY THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COUP FOR

REGIONAL STABILITY AND, LESS OBVIOUSLY, FOR PROJECTION OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN THE AREA. THE POTENTIAL DANGER POSED TO REGIONAL STABILITY HAS A PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE AND SENSITIVITY FOR THE DESAI GOVERNMENT. THE GOI HAS INVESTED CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL CAPITAL IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS TIES WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND TO FOSTER BETTER RELATIONS THROUGHOUT THE REGION. IT HAS BEEN ABLE TO CITE ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THIS ENDEAVOR AS PERHAPS ITS MOST IMPRESSIVE FOREIGN POLICY ACHIEVEMENT. THIS POLITICAL STATE REINFORCES THE GOI'S SENSE OF SATISFACTION, WIDELY SHARED BY OTHERS HERE, WITH THE REGIONAL STATE OF PLAY AS IT EXISTED BEFORE THE EVENTS OF APRIL 27. THE FACT THAT THE IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES IN THE AREA (INCLUDING, SPECIFICALLY, PAK-FGHAN RELATIONS) OFFERED REDUCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAJOR POWER ACTIVITY AND INTRUSION ADDED TO GOI SATISFACTION. AMONG OTHER ADVANTAGES, IT HAD FACILITATED THE FURTHER REORIENTATION OF INDIAN POLICY IN THE GENUINELY NON-ALIGNED DIRECTION THE JANATA LEADERSHIP PREFERS.

3. LIKE OTHER CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS, THE GOI IS NOT REALLY SURE WHAT SHAPE THE POLICIES AND RELATIONSHIPS OF THE KABUL GOVERNMENT WILL EVENTUALLY TAKE AND WHAT THESE WILL MEAN FOR REGIONAL STABILITY AND BROADER POWER BALANCES. IT IS WATCHING THE SITUATION CAREFULLY# AND, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, HOPES BY BEING

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RESPONSIVE TO REASONABLE AFGHAN APPROACHES TO SERVE AS A MODERATING INFLUENCE ON THE NEW GOVERNMENT IF POSSIBLE. THE GOI HAS BEEN SENSITIVE TO THE GRAVE CONCERNS WHICH THE GOP FEELS ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COUP FOR PAKISTAN AND HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE PAK EMBASSY HERE. THE INDIANS SEEM TO HAVE GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO SEEK TO ALLAY WHAT THEY MUST HAVE ANTICIPATED WOULD BE PAK SUSPICION OF THEIR EARLY RECOGNITION OF THE TARAKI GOVERNMENT. THEY TELL US THAT THEY HAVE SINCE COUNSELLED THE PAKS TO FOLLOW THEIR APPROACH OF GIVING THE GOA WHAT A SENIOR MEA OFFICIAL HAS TERMED "THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT." THEY HAVE WELCOMED PAK RECOGNITION OF THE NEW KABUL REGIME AND EVIDENCE (THEY MENTION PRIORITY HANDLING OF WHEAT SHIPMENTS) OF GOP WILLINGNESS TO TRY TO KEEP ON GOOD TERMS WITH THE AFGHANS. WE ARE NOT AWARE, HOWEVER, THAT THEY HAVE TAKEN OR ARE CONSIDERING ANY MORE CONCRETE STEPS DESIGNED TO REASSURE FURTHER THE PAKS ABOUT INDIANS INTENTIONS AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THEM IN THEIR HOUR OF DISTRESS.

4. IN SEEKING TO TEMPER PAK REACTION TO WHAT HAS

HAPPENED IN AFGHANISTAN, THE GOI IS MOVED BY TWO CONCERNS. ONE IS ITS RECOGNITION THAT THE PAKS ARE NOT WITHOUT A VARIETY OF ASSETS, BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC, IN DEALING WITH AFGHANISTAN. THE INDIANS ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT THE PAK LEADERSHIP (FOR WHOSE COMPETENCE AND ADROITNESS THEY HAVE LIMITED REGARD) MAY SEEK TO MAKE HASTY USE OF THESE ASSETS, THUS FULFILING ITSELF THE PROPHECY OF DETERIORATING PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS BEING MADE IN ISLAMABAD. PERHAPS EVEN MOREIMPORTANT, AND THIS IS PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR PROPOSED REEXAMINATION OF OUR SUPPORT T THE CENTO ALLIES, IS THEIR SUSICPCION THAT THE PAKS MAY SEEK TO EXPLOIT TH THREAT FROM AN AFGHANISTAN CLOSELY TIED TO THE USSR TO BUILD UPP THEIR MILITARY STRENGTH IN WAYS THAT WOULD BOTH INTENSIFY

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BIG POWER COMPETITION WITHN THE SUBCONTINENT AND CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR INDIA. FOREIGN SECRETARY METHA HAS HINTED AT THIS TO ME, AND IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY REITERATED TO US MILDLY BUT CLEARLY BY A RESPONSIBLE MEA OFFICIAL. GIVEN THE HISTORICAL RECORD OF INDIAN AND PAK ACCUSATIONS ABOUT THE REAL PURPOSE THE OTHER AS HAD IN CALLING FOR ASSISTANCE AGAINST OSTENSIBLE THREATS FROM OUTSIDE, SUCH SUSPCIONS CAN BE REGARDED AS A FACT OF SUBCONTINTAL LIFE.

5. ALTHOUGH THE KABUL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE LED THE GOI TO FOCUS MOSTLY ON THE PROBLEMS OF REGIONAL STABILITY IN GENERAL AND PAK-AFGHAN AND PAK-INDIAN RELATIONS IN PARTICULAR, IT IS ALST DOUBTLESS WEIGHING THE BROADEH IMHACT OF THE GAINS TO THE SOIVETS WHICH THE INSTALLATION OF THE TARAKI GOVERNMENT REPRESENTS. THE GOI PROBABLY SUBSCRIBES TO THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY EMBASSY MOSCOW THAT THE SOVIETS, IN COSNIDERING FURTHER EXPLOITATION OF THEIR NEW AFGHAN ASSETS, WOULD TAKE INTO MAJOR ACCOUNT THEIR BROADER INTERESTS IN THE AREA, AND PARTICULARLY THEIR KEY RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA. THE INDIANS PROABLY HOPE THAT UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES THE SOVIETS WILL ACT WITH RESTRAINT, AND WILL SEEK TO

HAVE THE AFGHANS DO LIKEWISE. THEY MAY BE PREPARED IN A CREAFUL WAY TO URGE THE SOVIETS TO DO BOTH. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE WILL BE THOSE IN THE GOI AND ELSEWHERE IN INDIA WHO WILL SEE IN THE GAINS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE SCORED AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF SOVIET POWER WHICH, THEY WILL ARUGE, SHOULD PROMPT INDIA TO STRENGHTEN AGAIN ITS TIES WITH THE USSR. THE FORCE SUCH ARGUMENTS HAVE WILL SIGNIFICANTLY DEPENT ON THE RESPONSE THE WEST MAKES TO THE AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENTS AND TO POSSIBLE SOVIET MOVES TO MAKE USE OF ITS NEW ASSETS IN KABUL.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----071266 210805Z /11/42
P R 191314Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1699
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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EXDIS

CORRECTED COPY (TEXT CORRECTED)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. I BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT, AS OUR GOVERNMENT PRO-
CEEDS WITH THE PROPOSED POLICY REVIEW, IT KEEP THE
INDIAN DIMENSION OF THE PROBLEM IN MIND. THE INDIANS ARE
SENSTIVE ABOUT THEIR REGIONAL ROLE, AND HAVE BEEN
RESPONSIVE TO THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S READINESS
TO TAKE THEM INTO CONFIDENCE AND TO DISCUSS OUR MUTUAL

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PROBLEMS WITH THEM CANDIDLY. IF WE TALK TO THEM
FRANKFLY ABOUT AFGHANISTAN AND ITS UNFOLDING IMPLICATION
AS WE SEEM THEM, THIS COULD MATERIALLY HELPS US IN
SHAPING A FAVORABLE INDIAN REACTION TO WHAT WE EVENTUALLY
DECIDE TO DO, AND WHAT WE WOULD HOPE THAT THEY WOULD
DO. AN ABVIOUS FORUM FOR SUCH A USEFUL DIALOGUE WILL BE
THE WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS DESAI HAS WITH THE PRESIDENT
AND OTHER USG LEADERS.

7. IT IS OBVIOUSLY PREMATURE TO SUGGEST AT THIS POINT
ANY BLUEPRINT FOR OUR APPROACH TO THE INDIANS. A NUMBER
OF TENTATIVE THOUGHTS SEEM TO BE WORTH CONSIDERATION,
HOWEVER.

(A) IF WE CONCLUDE THAT WE SHOULD BOLSTER PAKISTAN
SECURITY BY OFFERING THE PAKS AN ARMS PACKAGE, TO BE MADE
AVAILABLE FOLLOWING THE SCRAPPING OF THE FRANCO-PAK RE-
PROCESSING PLANT, WE SHOULD TELL THE INDIANS AS FAR IN
ADVANCE AS POSSIBLE WHAT WE HAVE IN MIND AND WHY. WE
ASSUME THAT SUCH A PACKAGE WILL HAVE THE DUAL PURPOSE
OF DEMONSTRATING TO THE PAKS IN CONCRETE TERMS THE
IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO PAK INTERITY AND SECURITY AND
OF PROVIDING THE GOP WITH THE ARDWAR BEST SUITED TO
HANDLE THE HEIGHTENED THREAT TO IT. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF OUR RELATIONS HERE, IF IN DEVISING
THE PACKAGE, WE TOOK ACCOUNT TO THE EXTNT POSSIBLE OF
INDIAN SENSIBILTIES ABOUT A PAK ARMS BUILDUP AND THE
US ROLE IN IT. TTUS IT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEIOUS HERE
IF THE PLANE WE MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PAKS, IF WE
DECIDE TO MVE IN THAT DIRECTION, WERE THE F-5 RATHER
THAN THE A-7, AND IF THE EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED GENERALLY
WERE OF A EVIDENTLY DEFENSIVE NATURE. SUCH AN APPROACH,
WOULD, IF COURSE, FIT MORE READILY INTO OUR TRADITIONAL

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POLICY OF ARMS TRANSFERS TO THE REGION. WE DOUBT THAT
IT COULD ELIMINATE INDIAN MISGIVINGS ABOUT WHAT WE WERE
DOING (UNELSS THE SOVIETS ENGAGE IN SOME REALLY EGREGIOUS
MISCHIEF MAKING), BUT IT WOULD AT LEAST SERVE TO ALLAY
THESE.

(B) WE COULD ALSO URGE ON THE INDIANS SOME
POSITIVE MEASURES TO REASSURE THE PAKS ABOUT INDIAN
INTENTIONS. WE HAVEIN MIND HERE GOI ACCEPTANCE OF

AGHA SHAHI'S RECENT SUGGESTION TO THE INDIANS OF A REGIONAL PACK TO BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HERE, INDIA'S CONCERN ABOUT CHINA WILL REMAIN A PROBLEM, BUT IN THIS AND OTHER EFFORTS WE MIGHT PROFITABLY ENLIST THE HELP OF THE IRANIANS, WHOSE FRIENDSHIP IS IMPORTANT TO THE INDIANS AND WHOSE HEIGHTENED SECURITY CONCERNS ALSO FIGURE SIGNIFICANTLY IN THE GOI'S ASSESSMENT OF AFGHANISTAN EVENTS.

(C) AS WE PREPARE TO MAKE THESE APPROACHES TO THE INDIANS, WE MIGHT RECONSIDER OUR NEGATIVE STANCE TOWARD THE DPSA. WHILE A WILLINGNESS ON THE INDIAN'S PART TO GIVE UP OR POSTPONE ACQUISITION OF THE DPSA WOULD NO DOUBT HELP TO LESSEN PAKISTAN SECURITY CONCERNS, IT WOULD BE UNREALISTIC FOR US TO PREPARE TO ASK THE GOI TO ACQUIESCE IN OUR BUILDING UP THE PAK ARMED FORCES WHILE WE AT THE SAME TIME PERSIST IN OUR DETERMINED OPPOSITION TO WHAT THE INDIANS CONSIDER THEIR LEGITIMATE MILITARY REQUIREMENTS. AT A TIME WHEN SOVIET INFLUENCE HERE IS LIKELY TO BE RISING IN THE WAKE OF THEIR KABUL GAINS, IT NO LONGER MAKES AS MUCH SENSE AS IT ONCE DID TO TRY TO PREVENT INDIAN ACCESS TO A WESTERN WEAPONS SYSTEM WHICH WILL SIGNIFICANTLY DIVERSITY INDIAN MILITARY SUPPLY SOURCES. INDEED, IT COULD BE ARGUED THAT, GIVEN THE INCREASED RUSSIAN PRESENCE AND PRESTIGE ON THE NORTHWEST RIM OF THE SUBCONTINENT, IT IS DISTINCTLY IN OUR INTEREST TO

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LINK INDIAN INTO A DEPENDENCY ON THE WEST FOR THE DPSA AND OTHERFORMS OF SOPHISTICATED MILITARY HARDWARE. I RECOGNIZE THAT FOR US TO TONE DOWN OUR OPPOSITION TO THE DPSA, LET ALONE UNDERTAKING TO ENCOURAGE ITS PURCHASE IN THE WEST, WOULD PRESENT A SUBSTNATIAL MODIFICATION IN OUR ESTABLISHED ARMS-TRANSFER POLICY. I WOULD SUBMIT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS MERITS CONSIDERATION. IF SO, IT WOULD ADD STILL FURTHER WEIGHT TO AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN'S TRENCHANT COMMENTS ON THE NEED FOR AN EDUCATIONAL EFFORT WITHIN OUR OWN GOVERNMENT.

(D) AS WE MOVE FORWARD, WE SHOULD, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, KEEP THE INDIANS INFORMED ABOUT WHAT WE INTEND WITH THE PAKS AND THE PAKS INFORMED OF WHAT WE INTEND WITH INDIA. AND WE SHOULD IN EVERY WAY ENCOURAGE THEM TO RECOGNIZE BETTER THEIR COMMON INTERESTS.

8. THESE ARE, IN ANY EVENT, TENTATIVE THOUGHTS. AS THIS REVIEW GETS UNDERWAAY I WOULD HOPE TO HAVE FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN WHAT I REGARD AS A HIGHLY IMPORTANT EXERCISE

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